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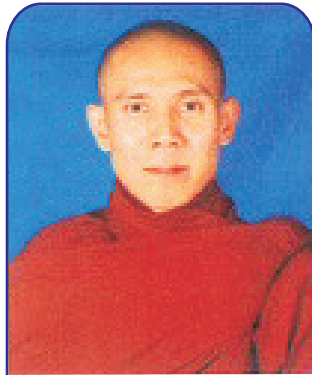
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## THE WAYS TO ENLIGHTENMENT AND LIBERATION FOUND IN THERAVADA BUDDHIST LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT

Before the final passing away of the Buddha, He admonished his disciples '*Appamādenasampa detha*' means 'to strive on your liberation' at His crucial time. That word is called '*pacchima Buddha vacana*', the last word of the Buddha. Liberation means end of suffering, the circle of life in

Samsara. No one can escape from the circle of life so long as one has full of craving.

The Buddha shed light on the reasons why human being has been running in Samsara. He said to His disciples as follow '*Catunna ñariyasac canañananubodha aparivedas andhavittam sañsaritam.*' 'It is through not understanding, not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that we as well as you have for a long time run on and gone round the circle of birth-and-death.' Birth (*Jati*) and death (*Marañā*) can be overcome through understanding the Truths said the Buddha. Out of the Four Noble Truths, the last one, *Dukkha nirodhagamini-pañpadaariyasacca*, the way leading to the cessation of suffering was taught in great detail by showing the Noble Eightfold Path. By following these paths step by step one can



stage on the ways to Enlightened and liberate from the circle of life. The eight steps can be subsumed under the three heads: Morality (*Sila*), Concentration (*Samadhi*) and Wisdom (*Pañña*).

Based on the eight steps purification (*Visuddhi*) can be gained. The ways how to purify one's inner impurity mind can have been explained in the well-known *Pali* text in Theravada Buddhism '*Visuddhimagga*', the Path of Purification. The path was classified into Seven Stages: (1) *sila-visuddhi* – purification of morality, (2) *citta-visuddhi* – purification of the mind by concentration, (3) *ditti-visuddhi* – purification of views, (4) *kankhavitaraṇa-visuddhi* – purification by overcoming doubt, (5)

maggamagga-ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi – purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path, (6) *paññāpada-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi* – purification by knowledge and vision of the way, and (7) *ñāṇadassana-visuddhi* – purification by knowledge and vision.

The Seven Stages are the ways to Enlightenment and Liberation taught by the Buddha. By stepping on these stages step by step strictly one can be free from suffering, the circle of Samsara. Those stages have been focused in this paper in precise.

**KEYWORDS** :Enlightenment, Liberation, *Visuddhi*, and *Ñāṇa*.

#### INTRODUCTION :

The Buddha, whose personal name was *Siddharttha*, and family name *Gautama*, attained Enlightenment at the age of thirty five. After his Enlightenment, the Buddha delivered his first sermon to a group of five ascetics, his old colleges, together with eighteen thousand devas and brahmas coming from the ten thousand world systems, in the Deer Park at Isipatana (modern Sarnath) near Benares. This first sermon is known as the four noble truths: (1) the truth of suffering or the first noble truth, (2) the truth of arising of suffering or the second noble truth, (3) the truth of cessation of suffering or the third noble truth and (4) the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering of *dukkha* or the fourth noble truth.

With regard to the four noble truths we have four functions to perform. The first noble truth is *dukkha*, the nature of life, its suffering, its sorrows and joys, its imperfection and unsatisfactoriness, its impermanence and insubstantiality. With regard to this, our function is to understand it as a fact, clearly and completely. This function is called *pariññeya-kicca* in Pāli. The second noble truth is the origin of *dukkha*, which is desire, 'thirst', accompanied by all other passions, defilements and impurities. A mere understanding of this fact is not sufficient. Here our function is to discard it, to eliminate, to destroy and eradicate it. This function is called *pahatabba-kicca* in Pāli.

The third noble truth is the cessation of *dukkha*, Nirvana, the absolute truth, the ultimate reality. Here our function is to realize it. This function is called *sacchikatabba-kicca* in Pāli. The fourth noble truth is the path leading to the realization of Nirvana. A mere knowledge of the path, however complete, will not do. In this case, our function is to follow it and keep to it. This function is called *bhavaṭṭabbakicca* in Pāli.

Among them, the fourth noble truth is that of the way leading to the cessation of suffering or *dukkha*. This is known as the Middle Path called *Majjhima Paññāpada* because it avoids two extremes: one extreme being the search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses, which is low, common, unprofitable and the way of ordinary people; the other one being the search for happiness through the self-mortification in different forms of asceticism, which is painful, unworthy and unprofitable.

This Middle Path is generally referred to as the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya-atthaṅgika-magga*) because it is composed of eight categories or divisions: namely, (1) Right View (*samma-ditthi*), (2) Right Thought (*samma-sankappa*), (3) Right Speech (*samma-vasa*), (4) Right Action (*samma-kammanta*), (5) Right Livelihood (*samma-ajiva*), (6) Right Effort (*samma-vayama*), (7) Right Mindfulness (*samma-sati*), and (8) Right Concentration (*samma-samadhi*). Practically, the whole teaching of the Buddha deals in some way or other with this Path. The Buddha explained it in different ways and in different words to different people, according to the essence of those many thousand discourses scattered in the Buddhist Scriptures found in this Middle Path.

These eight factors are all linked together and each helps the cultivation of others. They aim at promoting and perfecting the three essentials of Buddhist training and discipline – namely: (1) Ethical Conduct – *sila*, (2) Mental discipline – *samadhi*, and (3) Wisdom – *pañña*.

Among them, (1) the Ethical Conduct, *sila*, consists of three factors called *samma-vaca*, *samma-kammanta*, and *samma-ajiva*. These three factors are the middle three factors of the noble eightfold path. The interpretation of these three factors is as follows:

(i) *Samma-vaca* (right speech) means abstains from telling lies (*musa-vada*), backbiting and slander and talk that may bring about hatred enmity, disunity and disharmony among individuals (*pisuna-vaca*), harsh, rude, impolite, malicious (*pharusa-vaca*), and useless, and foolish babble and gossip (*samphappalapa-vaca*). When one abstains from these forms of four speeches, one naturally has to speak the truth, has to use words that are friendly, benevolent, pleasant, gentle, meaningful and useful. One should not speak carelessly: speech should be at the right time and place. If one cannot say something useful, one should keep ‘noble silence’.

(ii) *Samma-kammanta* (right action) consists of abstaining from the three demeritorious bodily actions, i.e., killing living beings (*panatipata*), taking that which is not given (*adinnadana*), and sexual misconduct (*kamesumicchacara*).

(iii) *Samma-ajiva* (right livelihood) means earning a living that is free from the three kinds of physical misdeed and the four kinds of evil speech. Right livelihood is abandoning wrong ways of living, which brings harm and suffering, to others:

- Trafficking – in arms and lethal weapons, in animals for slaughter, in human beings (i.e. dealing in slaves, which was prevalent during the time of the Buddha).
- Intoxicating drinks and poisons

And living by a profession, which is blameless and free from harm to oneself and others. One can clearly see here that Buddhism is strongly opposed to any kind of war, when it lays down that trade in arms and lethal weapons are an evil and unjust means of livelihood. These middle three factors can be called as morality *maggatīya* or social *maggatīya* or *silamaggatīya*.

(2) Mental discipline, *samadhi*, consists of three factors called *samma-vayama*, *samma-sati*, and *samma-samadhi*. These three factors are the last three factors of the noble eightfold path. The interpretation of these three factors is as follows:

(i) *Samma-vayama* means right effort or right endeavor. Right-effort consists in striving to discard whatever demerit that has accrued to oneself and to strive of whatever demerit that has not arisen in oneself, as well as in striving to earn whatever merit that has not accrued to oneself and to enhance whatever merit that has already arisen in oneself.

(ii) *Samma-sati* (right mindfulness) means being never forgetful about doing good things that are meritorious. Right mindfulness is to be diligently aware, mindful and attentive with regard to  
- The activities of the body (*kaya*)



- Sensation or feelings(*vedana*)
- The activities of mind (*citta*) and
- Ideals, thoughts, conception and things (*dhamma*).

The practice of concentration on breathing (*anapanassati*) is one of the well-known exercises, connected with the body, for mental development. There are several other ways of developing attentiveness in relation to the body – as modes of meditation. With regard to sensations and feelings, one should be clearly aware of all forms of feelings and sensations, pleasant and neutral, of how they appear and disappear within oneself. Concerning the activities of mind, one should be aware whether one's mind is lustful or not, hatred or not, deluded or not, distracted or concentrated, etc. In this way one should be aware of all movements of mind, how they arise and disappear. As regards ideas, thoughts, conceptions and things, one should know their nature, how they appear and disappear, how they developed, how they are suppressed, and destroyed, and so on.

(iii) *Samma-samadhi* (right concentration) consists of one's thought on a single object. Meditation is to be practiced only after concentration. In concentration we start with single objects, and in meditation we carry the clear conception of that simple object to the higher mental and intellectual levels to make it clear; imagine someone pouring water from above into a jar. If there are many holes round the bottom and sides of the jar, the water will run out, but if the holes are all filled in, the water will rise.

Most of us are like jar full of holes, ready to leak, so that we cannot concentrate our thoughts. Meditation will help to keep our consciousness steady without leakage and meditation fills it with clear vision and wisdom. By meditation on a chosen object, we will observe that object clearly and understand the function of it in conjunction with other things. By meditation, therefore, we enlarge our knowledge and wisdom. These last three factors can be called as *samadhi-maggaṅga* or *dhamma-maggaṅga* or concentration *maggaṅga*.

(3) Wisdom, *pañña*, consists of two factors called *samma-ditthi* and *samma-samadhi*. These two factors are the first two factors of the noble eightfold path. The interpretation of these three factors is as follows: (i) *samma-ditthi* (right view) means a firm belief in *kamma*, i.e., one's actions and result thereof. (ii) *Samma-saṅkappa* (right thinking) means thinking about renouncing the world, and thoughts free from ill will and cruelty. These first two factors can be called as wisdom-*maggaṅga* or *vijja-maggaṅga* or *pañña-maggaṅga*.

With the help of the bright, penetrative light radiated from the mind associated with the right concentration (*samma-samadhi*), meditators or yogis penetrate into the ultimate realities (*pramatthas*) that make up mind and body, define each consciousness (*citta*), each mental factor (*cetasika*), and each kind of ultimate materiality (*rūpa*) by means of their respective characteristics (*lakkhaṇa*), functions (*kiicca*), manifestations (*paccuparīḥana*) and approximate causes (*padarīḥana*), and then discern the causes that give rise to these mentality-materiality including the cause-effect relations of Dependent Arising (*pañcasamuppada*). Then they reflect on the three characteristics of formations in many special ways as described in *visuddhi magga* to develop insight knowledge (*Vipassanañāna*) one by one correctly so that the ultimate goal of *vipassana* – the realization of *Nibbana* – can be attained.

According to *rathavinīta sutta* and *visuddhimagga*, the mind is systematically purified in seven stages: (1) *silā-visuddhi* – purification of morality, (2) *citta-visuddhi* – purification of the mind by concentration, (3) *ditthi-visuddhi* – purification of views, (4) *kaṅkhaavitaraṇa-visuddhi* – purification by

overcoming doubt , (5) *maggamagga-ñāna-dassana-visuddhi* – purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path, (6) *paññāpada-ñānadassana-visuddhi* – purification by knowledge and vision of the way, and (7) *ñānadassana-visuddhi* – purification by knowledge and vision. 1–3. The first three visuddhi (purification of morality, etc.)

After achieving the purity of morality (*silavisuddhi*) by diligently observing catuparisuddhi sila and the purity of mind (*cittavisuddhi*) by developing the right concentration, a meditator or yogi should proceed to the third stage of purification (*dīrghāvisuddhi*). Here he must get rid of the wrong view of personality belief (*sakkayaditthi*) or ego-illusion (*attaditthi*), thinking that ‘I’, ‘person’, ‘self’, ‘soul’ or ‘ego’ exists. To do this he must analyze his body and mind into their ultimate components and define each ultimate material entity (*pathavi, apo, tejo*, etc.) and each ultimate mental entity (*citta and cetasikas*) in order to realize vividly that only the five aggregates of grasping (*upadanakkhandhas*) exist and that no soul, no self or no ego really exist.

So a yogi must perform the task of defining mentality-materiality when he enters the field of *vipassana*. To begin with it, which is easier than between mentality and materiality? The defining of materiality is first conducted in most of meditation centres. When the yogi clearly understands that there are only five aggregates that are arising and dissolving very rapidly and incessantly and there is no substantive entity that can be called a ‘person’, ‘self’, ‘soul’, or ‘ego’, he can dismiss the wrong view of ‘personality belief’ (*sakkaya-dīrghā*) and attains the purity of view (*dīrghā-visuddhi*). The knowledge of defining each citta, each cetasika and each kind of rūpa by means of their characteristics, functions, manifestations and approximate causes is known as ‘*namarūpa-pariccheda-ñāna*’ – the knowledge of defining mentality-materiality. (*dīrghā-visuddhi* and *namarūpa-pariccheda-ñāna* are the same level.)

4. *Kāṅkhavitaraṇa-visuddhi* (purification by overcoming doubt) The meditator who has defined the mentality-materiality both internally and externally must further discern the causes that give rise to these mentality-materiality. Otherwise doubt or wrong view may arise in him. So he discerns the four causes – *kamma, citta, utu* (heat) and *andahara* (nutriment) – which give rise to materiality. After developing the glittering and penetrative meditation light, he focuses his attention on his citta arising in the heart depending on the heart-base as well as on his fore-finger. When he intends to bend his fore-finger and is actually bending it, he can observe thousands of *cittaja-rūpa* produced by the citta that cause the finger to bend. Indeed, he can understand that all the movements of his body are caused by *cittaja-rūpa*.

Next, he focuses his attention on *arūpakalapa* and discerns a series of *utuja rūpakalapas* produced by the *utu (tejo)* in the kalapa. He can also discern another stream of *aharaja rūpakalapas* produced by the *ahara* (nutriment) in the kalapa in combination with the external nutriment. When he can discern the kamma that gives rise to the present existence, he can also observe *kammajarūpas* being incessantly produced by that kamma.

Then he investigates with the right thought (*sammasaṅkappa*) and the right understanding (*sammadīrghā*) the causes which give rise to mentality. Again with the help of the glittering, penetrative meditation light he discerns clearly that the eye-door cognitive series of consciousness arises due to the contact between the eye-door and a visible object; the ear-door cognitive series of consciousness arises due to the contact between the ear-door and an audible sound, and so on.

### Overcoming Sixteen Kinds of Doubt

Now there still exist five kinds of doubt or uncertainty about the past: “Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past?” Also there exist five kinds of uncertainty about the future: “Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?” Again there exist six kinds of uncertainty about the present: “Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? From what existence comes this existence? What existence will follow the present existence?”

To clarify these sixteen kinds of doubt, the meditator must discern vividly the cause-effect relations of Dependent Origination or Dependent Arising (*paññāsamuppāda*). The Buddha has reminded *ānanda* that beings have to undergo the round of rebirths life after life because they do not understand properly and penetratively the causal relations of Dependent Arising.

Also in *Visuddhimagga* and *Abhidhamma Commentary*, it is clearly stated thus: “There is no one, even in a dream, who has emancipated from the round of misery without the ability to break through the *paññāsamuppāda* causal relations of the *samsāra* machine with his wisdom sword which has been sharpened on the sacred whetstone of concentration.” Thus, the causal relations of *paññāsamuppāda* must be discerned and verified by insight wisdom to clarify all doubts and straighten all wrong views.

### OVERCOMING FIVE KINDS OF DISBELIEF

After discerning clearly all the causal relations from the most past existence to the last future existence, one can observe the whole series of the arising and dissolving of mentality-materiality extending from the most past existence to the last future existence. So one can get rid of all the sixteen doubts described earlier as well as the wrong views such as the ‘view of uncausedness’ (*ahetuka-dīṇhi*), the ‘view of the wrong cause’ (*visama-hetuka-dīṇhi*), the ‘view of the inefficacy of action’ (*akiriya-dīṇhi*), the ‘view of Nihilism’ (*natthika-dīṇhi*), the ‘view of eternity of the soul’ (*sassata-dīṇhi*), and the ‘view of annihilation of the soul’ (*uccheda-dīṇhi*). (The last two *dīṇhi* is sometimes called *attadīṇhi*.)

When he has discerned the conditions of mentality-materiality in this way by means of knowing *paññāsamuppāda* (the causal relations of Dependent Arising), he abandoned uncertainty about the three periods of times, then all past, future and present states are understood by him in accordance with death and rebirth-linking. This marks the state of purification by overcoming doubt (*Kaṅkhaṅkharāṅga-visuddhi*). The ‘knowledge of discerning the causes of mentality-materiality’ is known as *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna*.

**5. *Maggamagga-ñānadassana-visuddhi* (purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path)** In this state *visuddhi* consists of two kinds of knowledge: *sammasana-ñāna* and *udayabbaya-ñāna* (forepart). *Sammasana-ñāna* is the knowledge of defining mentality-materiality as impermanence, painful and not self to the highest level. *Udayabbaya-ñāna* is the knowledge that comprehends distinctly mentality-materiality at the genetic instant (*uppāda-ñāna*) as well as at the dissolving instant (*bhaṅga-ñāna*) together with the three characteristic marks of impermanent, painful, and not-self.

**6. *Paṭipada-ñāṅga-dassana-visuddhi* (purification by knowledge and vision of the way)** In this state *visuddhi* consists of nine kinds of knowledge: *udayabbaya-ñāna* (last part), *bhaṅga-ñāna*, *bhaya-ñāna*, *adinava-ñāna*, *nibbida-ñāna*, *muccitukamyata-ñāna*, *paṭisaṅkha-ñāna*, *saṅkharupekkha-ñāna* and



*anuloma-ñāna*.

*Udayabbaya-ñāna* is the knowledge comprehends distinctly mentality-materiality at the genetic instant (*uppadakkhañāna*) as well as at the dissolving instant (*bhāṅgakkhañāna*) together with the three characteristic marks of impairment, painful and not-self. *Bhāṅga-ñāna* is the knowledge of contemplation of dissolution. *Bhaya-ñāna* is the knowledge of appearance of Terror. *Ī dinava-ñāna* is realization of fault and unsatisfactoriness. *Nibbida-ñāna* is the knowledge of feeling bared and disgusted. *Muccitukamyata-ñāna* is the knowledge of desire for deliverance. *Paṅsaṅkha-ñāna* is the knowledge of exertion for deliverance. *Saṅkharupekkha-ñāna* is the knowledge of equanimity towards formations. *Anuloma-ñāna* is the conformity knowledge.

**7. *Ñāṭ adassana-visuddhi*(purification by knowledge by vision)** In this state visuddhi consists of *Gottarabhū-ñāna* and *Magga-ñāna*. The change of lineage knowledge is called *Gottarabhū-ñāna* while Path Wisdom is called *magga-ñāna*. On the other hand, *phala-ñāna* called Fruition Wisdom and *peccavekkhaṭṭa-ñāna* called Reviewing Wisdom are above these two *gottarabhū-ñāna* and *magga-ñāna*. These are the comparison of Seven Kinds of Visuddhi and Sixteen Kinds of Knowledge.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the above mentioned seven stages focus on the way how to follow the path that leads to liberation from suffering, the circle of life. The techniques have been shown systematically found in *Theravada* Buddhism. Therefore, everyone who wanted to Enlightened should step on the footprint of the Buddha.

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